

23rd June 1978

SPEECH - CHAIR OF MODERN GREEK UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND -

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONSUL GENERAL, MR. GEORGIOU BECOMING PATRON.

Gentlemen,

It is indeed a privilege to be able to say a few words this evening on the wonderful occasion of Mr. Georgiou becoming Patron of the Association for Establishment of Modern Greek at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Thank you Dinner Daughter Christmas
At the outset allow me to express a word of gratitude on behalf of all of us to Mrs. Georgiou for making her home available for this wonderful occasion.

Mr. Georgiou, it is indeed a privilege and an honour to have you as patron of the Association for Modern Greek at the University of the Witwatersrand. Not only are we enriched by a personality such as yourself who has the interest of Greek culture at heart, but the fact that it is also the Office of the Consul General of Greece, that is heading and concerned, with the affairs of Modern Greek at the University of the Witwatersrand.

We are indeed enriched on this occasion both in your person and the Office.

Undoubtedly, Sir, you are as aware as what we all are that to conduct these courses at Universities in South Africa today is no easy task. It unfortunately requires finance. Having overcome the initial difficulties to have Modern Greek introduced as a course at the University of the Witwatersrand, we now face the continuous task of having to finance the course in terms of the University's requirements (Mr. Bizo has referred to this task previously).

Gentlemen, let us examine why it is so important for the South African Hellenes to have their mother tongue taught at the South African Universities, and especially as far as I am concerned, at the University where the greater volume of Greek students attend.

The fact that a greater number of Hellenic students attend Wits is a natural phenomena due to the concentration of population on the Witwatersrand, it being the only English speaking University on the Witwatersrand.

We want the language to be taught at Universities not only for purposes of sentiment or patriotism. The language which is the Modern Greek spoken today, is very necessary in a lot of other respects.

Firstly, if sufficient people qualify, who have taken Modern Greek as a course, they will be able to serve South African society by using the language. They will for instance be able to enter the teaching profession. We find that although presently the Greek Government supplies us with teachers for our Greek schooling, the introduction of South African born teachers who will be able to mix with the Greek speaking teachers, will I am sure, enhance the level of scholastic attainment. It will make things easier for all concerned for Greek to be taught by those who understand the inherent problems of the South African Hellenic children.

I also foresee the need for the use of Modern Greek because as Greece progresses economically and as the economic relationship between Greece and South Africa increases, local industry and commerce will require more people who will be able to cope with both languages, namely, Greek and English when corresponding with Greece. This factor, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not see as very far fetched and am certain that it is around the corner within a reasonable period.

I have no doubt that there are many more reasons as to why we should have our language taught at the Universities of South Africa. I am certain there are people here that would be able to elucidate far more than I have. I have only touched on the tip of the iceberg.

Akameori.

Our Communities throughout the country, I am certain, make it their first and foremost task to have the Greek language taught at school level. With Saheti coming onto the scene, our Greek cultural environment has been greatly enriched. We foresee that within a very reasonable time that Modern Greek will be a matric subject. I ask, therefore, why must we not have the language at the Universities. Is this not the ultimate achievement we want for the Greek language?

Κύριοι, δεν είναι κάτω από τις δυνάμεις μας, δεν είναι κάτω από τις οργανωτικές ικανότητες των Κοινοτήτων, Αδελφοτήτων, Συλλόγων, Σωματείων της Νότιου Αφρικής, να αγκαλιάσουμε την ελληνική πολιτιστική μας παράδοση και τη γλώσσα μας και να κάνουμε τη διδασκαλία της ^{σε} έναν από τους πρωταρχικούς στόχους μας. Αυτές οι οργανώσεις που θέλουν να διατηρήσουμε την πολιτιστική μας ταυτότητα στη Νότιο Αφρική, που κληρονομήσαμε από τους προγόνους μας, πρέπει να αγωνιστούν ώστε να συνεχιστεί η διδασκαλία της νεοελληνικής γλώσσας στο πανεπιστήμιο του Witwatersrand, κάτι που δεν πρέπει να θεωρηθεί σαν δύσκολο καθήκον. Εξ άλλου δεν πρόκειται να υπερβαρύνει τις Κοινότητες και τα Σωματεία, ή για τον ίδιο λόγο και εμάς σαν άτομα.

Δεν νομίζω ότι εμείς που συγκεντρωθήκαμε απόψε εδώ, θα θέλαμε να θεωρηθούμε συνυπεύθυνοι στην αποτυχία, εφόσον δεν διατηρηθεί τελικά η έδρα των νέων ελληνικών στο πανεπιστήμιο του Witwatersrand, απλά επειδή δεν υπήρχαν τα κεφάλαια. Αυτό δεν ήταν ποτέ θέμα στην ιστορία του Ελληνισμού. της Νότιου Αφρικής και σίγουρας ότι δεν θα είναι η υπ' αριθμόν ένα υπόθεση στην μελλοντική ιστορία του. Λοιπόν κύριοι, ας δούμε τι μπορούμε να κάνουμε, ας εξετάσουμε όλες τις απόψεις και ας υποστηρίξουμε τη συγκεκριμένη πρωτοβουλία που είναι κάτω από την αιγίδα και την προσωπική καθοδήγηση του Γενικού μας Προξένου, του κυρίου Γιώργου Γεωργίου.

Gentlemen, it is not beyond us, it is not beyond the competent structures of our Communities, Organisations, Brotherhoods, Societies in South Africa, that embrace the Greek culture and language and make its teaching one of its primary tasks. These Organisations who wish us to retain our inherited culture in the Republic of South Africa and to retain the Modern Greek language at the University of the Witwatersrand, should not find it a difficult task. It is not going to overtax the Societies or Communities or for that matter, the individuals.

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I know as well as anybody concerned of the difficulties we face to run our Communities and organisations. I am aware of the continuous funding problem, but to retain Greek at Wits will not break our backs.

Bear in mind that the contributions to the University are tax deductible organisations, Communities that wish to assist, can do this directly via their members so that individual members may obtain the tax benefit, there is no reason why the tax benefits must not be exploited.

I thank you Gentlemen, and you in particular Mr. Georgiou, thank you for allowing me to say these words, which I assure you are not easy, it is not easy to have to address people continuously for contributions of money such as what I have had the case to be doing in recent years, but it is a task that has to be done and I am certain each and everyone here this evening, individually and their representative capacities, will not let me down, they will not let the language of Modern Greek down.

as soon as we start surely let carry on

Thank you.

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